

Top Biden aide says Ukraine invasion could come 'any day'

By AAMER MADHANI
Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday that Russia could invade Ukraine "any day," launching a conflict that would come at an "enormous human cost." The senior adviser to President Joe Biden offered another stark warning the day after U.S. officials confirmed that Russia has assembled at least 70% of the military firepower it likely intends to have in place by mid-month to give President Vladimir Putin the option of launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. "If war breaks out, it will come at an enormous human cost to Ukraine, but we believe that based on our preparations and our

response, it will come at a strategic cost to Russia as well," Sullivan said. Sullivan did not directly address reports that the White House has briefed lawmakers that a full Russian invasion could lead to the quick capture of Kyiv and potentially result in as many as 50,000 casualties as he made appearances on a trio of Sunday talk shows. U.S. officials, who discussed internal assessments of the Russian buildup on the condition that they not be identified, sketched out a series of indicators suggesting that Putin intends to start an invasion in the coming weeks, although the size and scale are unclear. They stressed that a diplomatic solution appears to remain possible.

Continued on next page



A local resident throws a Molotov cocktail against a wall during an all-Ukrainian training campaign "Don't panic! Get ready!" close to Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022.

Associated Press

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Continued from Front

Among those military indicators: An exercise of Russia's strategic nuclear forces that usually is held each fall was rescheduled for mid-February to March. That coincides with what U.S. officials see as the most likely window for invasion. The administration has stepped up warnings in recent days that Russia increasingly seems intent on further invading Ukrainian territory. Last week, Biden administration officials said that in-



Local residents attend an all-Ukrainian training campaign "Don't panic! Get ready!" close to Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022. Associated Press

telligence findings showed that the Kremlin had worked up an elaborate plot to fabricate an attack by Ukrainian forces that Russia could use as a pretext to take military action against its neighbor. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Thursday that the scheme included production of a graphic propaganda video that would show staged explosions and use corpses and actors depicting grieving mourners.

"It could happen as soon as tomorrow or it could take some weeks yet," Sullivan said. He added that Putin "has put himself in a position with military deployments to be able to act aggressively against Ukraine at any time now." Sullivan said that the administration held on to hope that the Russians would move to de-escalate the situation through diplomacy.

"The key thing is that the United States needs to be and is prepared for any of those contingencies and in lockstep with our allies and partners," Sullivan said. "We have reinforced and reassured our allies on the eastern flank."

Texas Rep. Michael McCaul, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, attended a classified briefing last week that administration officials gave to members of Congress. He was asked whether he came away from the briefing thinking it was certain that Russia would move on Ukraine.

"I would say the conditions are there. It's more likely than not. I think the noose is being prepared. It's around Ukraine right now as we speak. These are dangerous times," McCaul said. Biden's ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said the administration was still

seeking a diplomatic solution, but "at the same time, we know that the Russians continue to prepare, and we will be working to address the security issues."

Sen. John Barrasso, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Ukraine was the first part of Putin's plan to reassemble the Soviet Union. He worried about what signal that could send to U.S. adversaries.

"He needs to choke on trying to swallow Ukraine because if it's easy pickings for him, my worry is that then China moves against Taiwan and Iran moves quickly to a nuclear weapon."

Meanwhile, elite U.S. troops and equipment landed Sunday in southeastern Poland near the border with Ukraine following Biden's orders to deploy 1,700 soldiers there amid fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine. Hundreds more troops from the 82nd Airborne Division are expected to arrive at the Rzeszow-Jasionka Airport. A U.S. Air Force Boeing C-17 Globemaster plane brought a few dozen troops and vehicles.

Their commander is Maj. Gen. Christopher Donahue, who on Aug. 30 was the last American soldier to leave Afghanistan.

"Our national contribution here in Poland shows our solidarity with all of our allies here in Europe and, obviously, during this period of uncertainty we know that we are stronger together," Donahue said at the airport.

Biden ordered additional U.S. troops deployed to Poland, Romania and Germany to demonstrate America's commitment to NATO's eastern flank amid the tensions between Russia and Ukraine. NATO's eastern member Poland borders both Russia and Ukraine. Romania borders Ukraine. □

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VMI to change honor system said to expel Blacks more often

LEXINGTON, Va. (AP) — The Virginia Military Institute says it will change its student-run honor court to make it more fair to cadets as part of a response to a state-ordered investigation into racism and sexism at the school.

VMI detailed the reforms in a progress report Friday, The Washington Post reported. The 70-page report, which the college gave to General Assembly members and the Virginia secretary of education, describes initiatives approved, enacted or begun last year. Those initiatives included mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion training for administrators and members of VMI's Board of Visitors, and changes to the Lexington school's one-strike-and-you're-out honor court system.

Data obtained by the newspaper showed Black students at VMI were expelled by the honor court at a disproportionately high rate for the three academic years between the fall of 2017 and the spring of 2020. Though Black cadets made up about 6% of the student body, they represented about 43% of



This July 15, 2020, file photo shows the barracks at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Va.

Associated Press

those expelled for honor code violations.

Twelve out of the 28 VMI students dismissed in those three academic years were Black. When students of color were included in the count, the number of expelled rose to 15, or about 54% of the total, even though minorities made up only about 21% of the student population in that three-year period.

Barnes & Thornburg, a law firm hired by the state to investigate racism and sexism at VMI, recommended in its

final report that the college "consider changing" its policy of allowing convictions without unanimous verdicts by student juries.

But VMI, which received \$21.6 million in state funding for the 2021-2022 academic year, reported Friday that it will continue to allow student prosecutors to win cases with non-unanimous verdicts. One concession the school did make was that student juries will expand in size and guilty verdicts will require nine out of 11 jury votes instead of five

of seven votes.

Another change would allow cadets to use pro bono attorneys during their trials. VMI used to allow lawyers to represent cadets during the proceedings, but stopped about a decade ago because of complaints that the professional litigators prosecuted the system itself and that only affluent students could afford them.

Now, VMI will draw up a list of pro bono lawyers willing to work with cadet defendants and their "defense

advocates" — typically VMI faculty or staff members — before and during trials. But the attorneys will be allowed only to observe and consult their client or their defense advocate during the hearing, not argue the case themselves.

All of the new honor court changes will go into effect in August 2022, at the beginning of the next academic year.

The college also said it will begin retaining "key demographic data" to "monitor the fairness of the system." VMI's chief diversity officer, Jamica Love, will help "facilitate annual reviews" of the honor system, the report said.

A state-sanctioned report released last year said VMI has tolerated and failed to address institutional racism and sexism and must be held accountable for making changes.

The 145-page report compiled by an independent law firm at the request of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, said "racial slurs and jokes are not uncommon" and "contribute to an atmosphere of hostility toward minorities." □

Crossing lines, Manchin endorses Murkowski's Senate campaign

By HOPE YEN

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin on Sunday endorsed Republican colleague Lisa Murkowski for reelection, crossing party lines to back the incumbent from Alaska who faces a primary challenger supported by former President Donald Trump. The conservative West Virginia lawmaker said he has teamed well with Murkowski in the 50-50 Senate to build bipartisan support for legislation such as President Joe Biden's infrastructure law. He said Alaska and the Senate are well-served with her in office.

"It's hypocritical to basically work with a person day in and day out and then, when they're in cycle, you're supposed to be against them because they have an R or D by their name," said Manchin, who

appeared with Murkowski on CNN's "State of the Union" to promote the values of bipartisanship.

"Alaska could only be so lucky to have her continue to serve them," he said.

Murkowski faces GOP primary challenger Kelly Tshibakka, who has support from Trump and Alaska Republican party leaders but who significantly trails the incumbent in fundraising. A Democrat has yet to enter the race; the state's last Democratic senator, Mark Begich, lost reelection in 2014.

It isn't the first time that Manchin has bucked his party's political operation. In 2020, he endorsed Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, in her reelection bid. Manchin had indicated last April that he would support Murkowski if she chose to run again this year. Murkowski is one

of seven Republican senators who voted to convict Trump in his second impeachment trial for his role in stoking the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection. Her reelection bid plays up her credentials as a centrist in the Senate, working across party lines to "stand up to any politician or special interest that threatens our way of life."

A member of the Senate since 2002, Murkowski lost the Republican primary for her seat in 2010 but ultimately won after launching a successful write-in campaign. She's joined Democrats several times on high-profile votes, including opposing Trump's effort to repeal President Barack Obama's health law in 2017 and her 2018 refusal to vote to confirm Brett Kavanaugh as a Supreme Court justice.

Murkowski said Sunday she



Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, questions Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo during a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies hearing on expanding broadband access, Tuesday Feb. 1, 2022, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

as well would support Manchin, who is up for reelection in 2024.

"If he's running, I'm endorsing him," she said.

Manchin has drawn ire from the progressive wing

of his party over his reluctance to back broad climate and social safety net legislation that Biden envisioned would pass with support from all 50 Democratic senators. □

Millions in tax dollars flow to anti-abortion centers in U.S.

By **KIMBERLEE KRUESI**
NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)

— Anti-abortion centers across the country are receiving tens of millions of tax dollars to talk women out of ending their pregnancies, a nearly fivefold increase from a decade ago that resulted from an often-overlooked effort by mostly Republican-led states.

The nonprofits known as crisis pregnancy centers are typically religiously affiliated and counsel clients against having an abortion as part of their free but limited services. That practice and the fact that they generally are not licensed as medical facilities have raised questions about whether it's appropriate to funnel so much tax money their way.

An Associated Press tally based on state budget figures reveals that nearly \$89 million has been allocated to such centers across about a dozen states this fiscal year. A decade ago, the annual funding for the programs hovered around \$17 million in about eight states.

Estimates of how many abortions have been prevented by such programs are unknown because many states only require reports of how many clients were served. Trying to



Portico Crisis Pregnancy Center executive Director Laura Messick, left, shows Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee one of two ultrasound examination rooms during a tour Jan. 26, 2022, in Murfreesboro, Tenn. Associated Press

pinpoint exactly how many pregnancy centers receive taxpayer dollars also is difficult because each state has a different system to distribute the money.

"It's bad governing. We're supposed to be monitoring our taxpayer money and we don't know where the money is going," said Julie von Haefen, a Democratic state representative in North Carolina, which has sent millions in public money to pregnancy centers. "These clinics don't provide

medical care. They act like they do, but they don't."

What is clear is that taxpayer funding for the centers has spiked in recent years as more Republican-led states have passed legislation severely limiting access to abortion.

The centers have also been accused of providing misleading information about abortion and contraception — for example, suggesting that abortion leads to mental health problems or breast cancer.

Supporters hope to expand the number of centers if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns or significantly restricts abortion rights in a case to be decided later this year. That momentum is already building in Texas, where a state law that effectively bans abortion at about six weeks — before many women know they are pregnant — has been in effect since September.

"We have seen women still steadily seeking out resources and services," said

Chelsey Youman, Texas state director and national legislative adviser for Human Coalition, a top contractor under the state's alternatives-to-abortion program. "Women are saying, 'All right, abortion isn't available after my child has a heartbeat, so what is out here?'"

The new law, Youman said, has helped refocus the crisis pregnancy centers' efforts on both women who have accepted the new restrictions and need help, as well as those who are wavering on whether to cross state lines to get an abortion.

Most centers offer pregnancy tests and pregnancy-related counseling. Some also offer limited medical services such as ultrasounds.

Last year, Tennessee lawmakers allocated money for several ultrasound machines to be placed in pregnancy centers. At a recent dedication of an ultrasound machine about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Nashville, Republican Gov. Bill Lee said the state-funded purchase was critical in swaying patients who were considering the procedure.

The first state to enact an official abortion-alternatives program was Pennsylvania in the mid-1990s. □

Former Pentagon chief Mark Esper drops lawsuit over memoir



In this June 26, 2019, photo, Acting U.S. Secretary for Defense Mark Esper speaks during a press point with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg prior to a meeting of NATO defense ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Defense Secretary Mark Esper has dropped a lawsuit against the Defense

Department in which he claimed that material was being improperly withheld from his use as he wrote a memoir about his tenure in the Trump administration. Esper's lawyer, Mark S. Zaid, said in a statement on Friday that the Pentagon had reversed its stance on "the overwhelming majority" of material that officials had deemed classified and thus not for publication. What remained in dispute over its classification wasn't central to Esper's book, Zaid said. The lawsuit filed Nov. 28 in U.S. District Court in Washington contended that "significant text" in the memoir was being improperly held under the guise of classifi-

cation. Esper has said publicly that some 60 pages of the manuscript contained redactions at one point during a security review and maintained that no classified information was being used.

The book, "A Sacred Oath," will be published in May, Zaid said.

The book covers Esper's time as Army secretary, 2017 to 2019, and his 18 months as defense secretary. President Donald Trump fired the West Point graduate and Gulf War veteran in a tweet shortly after Trump lost his reelection bid.

Esper and Trump clashed over several issues while

Esper led the Pentagon, including the use of the military during civil unrest in June 2020 following the killing of George Floyd.

No other president had fired a defense secretary after losing an election; doing so allowed Trump to place loyalists in leading Pentagon positions as he disputed his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

The lawsuit described the period in which Esper was Pentagon chief as "an unprecedented time of civil unrest, public health crises, growing threats abroad, Pentagon transformation, and a White House seemingly bent on circumventing the Constitution." □

Ex-US envoy: U.S. groups need to stop interfering in Canada

By **ROB GILLIES**
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A former U.S. ambassador to Canada said groups in the U.S. need to cease interfering in what many call an occupation in Canada's capital as protesters opposed to vaccine mandates and COVID-19 restrictions held rallies in cities across the country in a show of solidarity with a week-long demonstration in Ottawa.

"Under no circumstances should any group in the USA fund disruptive activities in Canada. Period. Full stop," Bruce Heyman, a former U.S. ambassador under President Barack Obama, tweeted late Saturday.

After crowdfunding site GoFundMe said it would refund or redirect to charities the vast majority of millions raised by demonstrators protesting COVID-19 measures in the Canadian capital, prominent U.S. Republicans like Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis complained. "It is a fraud for @gofundme to commandeer \$9M in donations sent to support truckers and give it to causes of their own choosing," DeSantis tweeted.

He added he would investigate these deceptive practices and donors should be given a refund.



A Donald Trump supporter protests in support of a trucker convoy protesting COVID-19 restrictions, at Queen's Park in Toronto, Saturday, Feb. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

But GoFundMe had already changed its mind and said it would be issuing refunds to all. GoFundMe said it cut off funding for the organizers because it had determined the effort violated the site's terms of service due to unlawful activity. Ontario Premier Doug Ford is calling it an occupation.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton tweeted: "Patriotic Texans donated to Canadian truckers' worthy

cause." Texas Sen. Ted Cruz said on Fox News the Canadian "government doesn't have the right to force you to comply to their arbitrary mandates."

Heyman said Republicans are more publicly concerned about events in Canada than Russia.

"For some senior American politicians, patriotism means renting a mob to put a G-7 capital under siege," tweeted Gerald Butts, a former senior ad-

viser to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In Canada's largest city, Toronto, police set up road blocks throughout downtown, preventing any protesters in trucks or cars from getting near the provincial legislature, which is near where five major hospitals are located. And police later moved in to clear a key intersection in the city. No protest remains.

Thousands descended in Ottawa again on the week-

end. Participants roasted hotdogs and doled out baked goods under tarps, while two men on horseback traipsed through the town, one carrying a flag in support of former U.S. President Donald Trump. Residents of Ottawa are furious at the nonstop blaring of horns, traffic disruption and harassment and fear no end is in sight. Ottawa's embattled police chief is calling it a "siege" that he can't manage.

The "freedom truck convoy" has attracted support from Trump and many Republicans. "The Freedom Convoy is peacefully protesting the harsh policies of far left lunatic Justin Trudeau who has destroyed Canada with insane Covid mandates," Trump said in a statement released Friday.

In Toronto a couple hundred health-care workers and supporters marched from the University of Toronto to Hospital Row just south of the legislature. They held placards reading, "freedom" and "N95 masks for all."

Demonstrators also gathered in Quebec City, and Winnipeg, Manitoba, but they dispersed and police in those cities said they have learned lessons from Ottawa's predicament. □

U.S. airborne infantry troops arrive in Poland amid tensions

By **MONIKA SCISLOWSKA**
and CZAREK SOKOLOWSKI
RZESZOW-JASIONKA, Poland (AP) — A few dozen elite U.S. troops and equipment were seen landing Sunday in southeastern Poland near the border with Ukraine, following President Joe Biden's orders to deploy 1,700 soldiers there amid fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Hundreds more infantry troops of the 82nd Airborne Division are still expected to arrive at the Rzeszow-Jasionka airport, 90 kilometers (56 miles) from Poland's border with Ukraine. A U.S. Army Boeing C-17 Globemaster plane brought a few dozen troops and vehicles. Their commander is Maj.

Gen. Christopher Donahue, who on Aug. 30 was the last American soldier to leave Afghanistan.

"Our national contribution here in Poland shows our solidarity with all of our allies here in Europe and, obviously, during this period of uncertainty, we know that we are stronger together," Donahue said at the airport.

In Warsaw, Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak hailed the deployment, saying that "deterrence and solidarity are the best response to Moscow's aggressive policy, to the aggressive attempt at reconstructing the Russian empire."

Russia has amassed some 100,000 troops on the bor-

ders of Ukraine, some for joint military exercises in Belarus, but insists it has no intentions of invading Ukraine.

A collective response by NATO members is "the best response to a threat, the only method of assuring security to Poland and to other NATO countries on the alliance's eastern flank," Blaszczak said.

He stressed he has held a number of talks on the subject with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

Biden ordered additional U.S. troops deployed to Poland, Romania and Germany to demonstrate to both allies and foes America's commitment to NATO's eastern flank amid rising tensions between



U.S. Army troops of the 82nd Airborne Division unloading vehicles from a transport plane after arriving from Fort Bragg, at the Rzeszow-Jasionka airport in southeastern Poland, Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022.

Associated Press

Russia and Ukraine. NATO's eastern member Poland borders both Russia and Ukraine. Romania borders Ukraine. The division can rapidly deploy within 18

hours and conduct parachute assaults to secure key objectives. Based in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the division's history goes back to 1917. □

UNICEF: Children in NE Syria prison live in dire conditions

BEIRUT (AP) — Children held in a prison in north-east Syria that witnessed 10 days of fighting between U.S.-backed fighters and Islamic State group militants are living in "incredibly precarious" conditions and they should not have been there in the first place, the U.N. children's agency said Sunday.

UNICEF added that the agency is ready to help support a new safe place in Syria's northeast to take care of the most vulnerable children, some of whom are as young as 12. Its statement came a day after a visit by one of its teams to the prison in the northeastern city of Hassakeh.

The UNICEF team said after visiting some children at the prison in the city of Hassakeh on Saturday that they have lived in dire conditions at the detention center for years and in January "witnessed and survived heightened violence" in and around the prison.

The visit came two days after IS's top leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, was killed in a U.S. raid on his safehouse in northwest



A soldier with the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces checks area in Hassakeh, Syria, Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022.

Associated Press

Syria. President Joe Biden said al-Qurayshi had been responsible for the Syria prison assault.

Over 3,000 inmates, of which some 600 are children, are held at the Hassakeh prison, known as Gweiran or al-Sinaa.

"Despite some of the basic services now in place, the situation of these children is incredibly precarious,"

Bo Viktor Nylund, UNICEF's Syria representative, said in the statement.

While boys were held separately from adults, the groups mixed when IS militants stormed the prison in a jailbreak on Jan. 20. Some inmates escaped, while others including child detainees were taken hostage in the ensuing battle. Nylund said UNICEF is work-

ing to provide safety and care for them while calling on all stakeholders to urgently find long-term solutions in the best interests of the children.

He said UNICEF is ready to help support a new safe place in Syria's northeast to take care of the most vulnerable children, some of whom are as young as 12. At a press conference on

Jan. 31, the U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said they had retaken control of the prison and confirmed that 77 prison employees, 40 Kurdish fighters and four civilians were killed, alongside 374 IS detainees and attackers.

The SDF provided no breakdown of the dead detainees, or how many of them were children.

Nylund said destruction in the surrounding area of the prison is significant with destroyed homes affecting an estimated 30,000 people. He said every effort, including by the Syrian government and local authorities, to provide immediate assistance should be supported. "Children should never be in detention due to association with armed groups," Nylund said. "Children associated with and recruited by armed groups should always be treated as victims of conflict."

He said UNICEF calls for the immediate release of children in all detention centers across northeast Syria and for handing them over to child protection agencies. □

U.N. experts: North Korea seeks to produce material for nukes



This photo provided by the North Korean government shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watches what it says a test launch of a hypersonic missile on Jan. 11, 2022 in North Korea.

Associated Press

By EDITH M. LEDERER

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — North Korea has continued to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programs including its capability to produce nuclear device components in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, U.N. experts said in

a new report.

The panel of experts said in the executive summary of the report obtained Saturday night by The Associated Press that there was "a marked acceleration" of Pyongyang's testing and demonstration of new short-range and pos-

sibly medium-range missiles through January, "incorporating both ballistic and guidance technologies and using both solid and liquid propellants."

"New technologies tested included a possible hypersonic guiding warhead and a maneuverable re-entry vehicle," the panel said. North Korea also demonstrated "increased capabilities for rapid deployment, wide mobility (including at sea), and improved resilience of its missile forces."

The experts said North Korea "continued to seek material, technology and know-how for these programs overseas, including through cyber means and joint scientific research."

A year ago, the panel said North Korea had modernized its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by flaunting United Nations sanctions, using cyberat-

tacks to help finance its programs and continuing to seek material and technology overseas for its arsenal including in Iran.

"Cyberattacks, particularly on cryptocurrency assets, remain an important revenue source" for Kim Jong Un's government, the experts monitoring the implementation of sanctions against the North said in the new report.

In recent months, North Korea has launched a variety of weapons systems and threatened to lift the four-year moratorium on more serious weapons tests such as nuclear explosions and ICBM launches. January saw a record nine missile launches, and other weapons it recently tested include a developmental hypersonic missile and a submarine-launched missile.

The Security Council ini-

tially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and made them tougher in response to further nuclear tests and the country's increasingly sophisticated nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

The panel of experts said North Korea's blockade aimed at preventing COVID-19 resulted in "historically low levels" of people and goods entering and leaving the country. Legal and illegal trade including in luxury goods "has largely ceased" though cross-border rail traffic resumed in early January, it said.

The panel has previously made clear that North Korea remains able to evade sanctions and to illicitly import refined petroleum, access international banking channels and carry out "malicious cyber activities." □

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Mexican cartels now use IEDs as well as bomb-dropping drones



Soldiers patrol near the hamlet Plaza Vieja in the Michoacan state of Mexico, Oct. 28, 2021.

Associated Press

By **MARK STEVENSON**

MEXICO CITY (AP) — In the war raging between drug cartels in western Mexico, gangs have begun using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on roads to disable army vehicles.

The self-defense movement in the town of Tepalcatepec, in western Michoacan state, said improvised land mines severely damaged an army armored car late last week.

A spokesman for the movement, which is battling the Jalisco cartel, supplied photos showing a disabled army light armored vehicle on a road with damage he said was caused by such a mine.

The spokesman, who refused to reveal his name for fear of reprisals, said the explosion happened last Saturday in the town of Taixtan, near Tepalcatepec, where locals have been battling Jalisco gunmen for

months.

The warring gangs already frequently use homemade armored cars and drones modified to drop small bombs. But it would be the first time IEDs have been successfully used by cartels in Mexico.

The Mexican Army did not respond to a request for specific comment on the IEDs. But the Defense Department did say army patrols were attacked in the area Saturday four times with explosives, homemade armored cars and gunfire that wounded 10 soldiers. The department did not specify what type of explosives were involved. The Milenio television station described the IEDs as PVC pipe bombs buried with a round metal base below and a conical metal cap to direct or concentrate the blast.

Security analyst Juan Ibarrola, who specializes in the

military, said "the worrisome thing is the improvisation that they (criminal groups) are doing with engineering, to create weapons, boobytraps, explosives and so on."

Rather than trying to fight an outright war with the army — which they know they would lose — Ibarrola said that with the IEDs and other devices "more than anything else, what they are trying to do is threaten

and take on rival groups."

It is not clear if the improvised land mines are only being used by one side in the bloody turf battle for control of Michoacan state, which drug traffickers value for its seaport and smuggling routes, as well as the opportunity to extort money from the state's growers of avocados and limes.

In November, residents of the Jalisco-dominated

village of Loma Blanca showed Associated Press journalists a small crater, with a round metal plate, where they said the Tepalcatepec forces had detonated a land mine.

While cartel gunmen across Mexico have used hand grenades and rocket-propelled grenades against police and soldiers before, IEDs have been practically unknown in the country's drug wars. □

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info@medcare.aw / www.medcare.aw

Locations: The Cove Mall (8:00 AM - 6:00 PM) Medcare near Courtyard by Marriott (8:00 AM - 2:00 PM)

Test today, fly tomorrow during the holidays

PALM BEACH — MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers has improved its services when it comes to turn around time for results. As of November its offering same day test results (previously it was 24 hours) on both PCR and Antigen tests.

This in part is to comply with the updated December 6, CDC requirement for travel to the United States, where all air passengers, regardless of vaccination status, must show a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 1 day before travel to the United States.

MedCare Fit2Fly Testing Center at the Cove Mall is opposite the Holiday Inn and is open every day for walk-ins from 8 AM through 6 PM. MedCare's other location is situated at The Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort, is across the street from the RIU Hotel and is open every day from 8:00 AM until 2 PM. These two locations are at a stone's throw from your resort, condominium, or other vacation accommodation. Walk-ins are welcome.

MedCare Clinic, a high-quality medical clinic that specializes in urgent care for tourists and that has been appointed as the national COVID-19 clinic for tourists, and Laboratorio di Servizio, a full-service modern medical laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment, have partnered up to provide fast and reliable COVID-19 testing to all. Laboratorio di Servizio is ISO-15189:2012 accredited by the Dutch Council for Accreditation (M317).

For your convenience



For a selection of resorts in Aruba, MedCare has setup Testing Centers

on site:

- Divi All Inclusive, Divi Dutch Village Beach Resort, Divi Golf, Divi Tamarijn
- Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort
- The Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort
- Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino
- Renaissance Wind Creek Aruba Resort
- The Ritz-Carlton Resort.

Please contact your front desk for more information on our Testing Centers at these properties.

Private bookings

For your convenience, Medcare also offers private testing at your accommodation/hotel room for a one-time service fee of \$120. This fee covers testing up to 10 people (one appointment, at one location and a specific time). Additional persons will be charged \$10 per person. Regular testing fees applies. □

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The Aruba Tourism Authority honor loyal visitors on the island.



NOORD □ Recently, Mr. Mario Arends had the great pleasure to honor a loyal and friendly visitor of Aruba as Emerald Ambassador at their home away from home. The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between

10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

The honoree was Joseph Pitti from New York

Mario Arends thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years together with

the members of Caribbean Palm Village

Top reason for returning provided by the honorees were:

Great weather, safety of the island and local food. □

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Our minds tuned in
Feelings and emotions
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Caressed by the crystal blue waters
Of the universal fountains from within
Decorated with coral and fishes of all colors
Far away from the hills and the mountains
Far away from the worries and the sick
Surrounded by friendly people everywhere
A community that listens and cares
And while the beautiful Jazz music is playing
We hear the sunset saying :
We are the blessing.... and
We will be always dancing in the wind....

Ruthy "Lady Ruth" Vrieswijk-Bergen.

ARUBA, 2022

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International Media Highlights Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort as Future of Climate-safe Travel

EAGLE BEACH – Oxford Business Group just asked, “How can the tourism industry achieve net zero?” The answer, it reveals, is to follow such trailblazers as Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Aruba.

“Various resorts and hotels have already taken significant steps towards decarbonization. In 2018 the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba became the first resort in the Caribbean – and one of the first in the world – to go carbon neutral. Other resorts have followed suit,” the Oxford Business Group reports.

As the world ramps up

answering the need to combat climate change, Oxford Business Group's January 27, 2022, coverage reports on the travel sector's actions, plans, and those leading the way including Bucuti & Tara.

The article has quickly gained traction appearing on other media sites and social media. Top search engine and news site Yahoo features it on its North American-based main page, which attracts more than 251 million visitors each day. It's also trending on Australian Yahoo Finance, in Energia Oltre (Energy Magazine) in Italy, and is also one of the four

feature articles currently on OilPrice.com, which has more than 320,400 site visitors each day.

Not business as usual

With the sharp rise in fossil fuel prices and decrease in supply, and the resulting climate-eroding emissions, the travel sector is awakening. This past autumn, the World Travel & Tourism Council together with UN Environment Program and Accenture examined what it will take to decarbonize the industry. One in 10 jobs is within the sector, which is responsible for 8% of the world's greenhouse emissions. The sector is a key driver in many countries,

such as Aruba where it is approximately 90% of the island economy's GDP.

The pathway is available to all

From Aruba to Thailand, the Austrian Alps to Saudi Arabia, and across aviation within the travel sector, uniform guidelines are helping hospitality entities begin or continue their journeys to net-zero. To streamline expectations and results, guidelines such as those within the new Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and the Paris Agreement, include science-based targets for accurate reporting. In added support of going net-zero in travel, investors are also factoring in Environmental, Social, and Governance, or ESG, criteria as they consider companies. These ethical and sustainability factors provide a fuller picture of the hotel's collective conscientiousness in their valuations. “The hospitality world is pressing the importance of going net-zero and the guidance is here for answering the call,” says Ewald Biemans, Owner/CEO of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort. “By going net-zero, together we increase our value as a vacation haven and preserve our community while protecting our shared, yet vulnerable, environment,” says Ewald Biemans, Owner/CEO of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort.

To learn more, visit Bucuti.com

About Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

Declared the first Carbon-Neutral®/net zero hotel in the Caribbean in August

2018, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort is one of the Top 10 Hotels for Romance in the World (third straight year), No. 1 Hotel for Romance in the Caribbean (sixth straight year) and No. 3 Hotel for Service in the Caribbean. Aruba's premier adults-only boutique resort is led by celebrated hotelier and environmentalist, Ewald Biemans, named by Caribbean Journal as the 2017 Caribbean Hotelier of the Year. The resort is nestled on the powdery white sands of Eagle Beach, home to protected sea turtles and named one of the “Dream Beaches of the World.” Now home to the Caribbean's Safest, Healthiest Vacation Experience thanks to its physician-developed COVID-19 safety protocols and Aruba's Health & Happiness Code seal, Bucuti has 104 well-appointed guestrooms, suites and penthouses. It offers sunbeds and shade for every guest; freshwater infinity pool; spa; WiFi; and complimentary iPad with Skype for use during stay. Award-winning healthy dining is enjoyed at oceanfront Elements, Tara Lounge and private beach dining. Reserved exclusively for guests and their friends, the newly renovated open-air SandBar offers top-shelf cocktails and live music daily along with the Caribbean's first Healthy Hour. The resort is TAG Approved® as a LG-BTQ-friendly hotel. Bucuti, a worldwide sustainable tourism leader, holds eco-certifications of LEED Gold, Green Globe Platinum and Travelife Gold and was named the World's Most Sustainable Hotel/Resort in 2016 by Green Globe. □

CNN exec Zucker's ouster shows peril of hiding work romance

By MAE ANDERSON

NEW YORK (AP) — For all the potential peril of a workplace romance, the most common source of trouble, experts say, is allowing it to remain a secret.

A case in point was this week's abrupt ouster of longtime CNN chief executive Jeff Zucker, who said he was "wrong" in not being upfront with the network about a consensual relationship he was having with another executive.

Zucker only acknowledged his relationship with CNN chief marketing officer Allison Gollust after being questioned about it during an investigation of now-fired anchor Chris Cuomo. The executive shakeup comes at a pivotal moment for CNN, and prominent employees have expressed dismay that things weren't handled differently.

"He should have known better," said David Lewis, CEO of Operations Inc., an HR consulting firm. "He decided to avoid what was a clearly stated policy by his employer. The problem with that is there was no good outcome once he decided not to tell."

Zucker is hardly alone in finding love at the office. About a third of U.S. workers say they are in a workplace relationship or have been



CNN chief executive Jeff Zucker attends the 13th annual CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute in New York on Dec. 8, 2019.

Associated Press

in one — and the trend has been on the rise since the start of the pandemic, according to trade association Society for Human Resource Management.

Most big corporations have a policy on workplace romance, but the majority of U.S. businesses do not, according to SHRM. Corporate policies can vary from forbidding all relationships to just those between managers and subordinates. Some simply require disclosure.

Among smaller businesses,

there are rarely rules at all. Nearly 80% of U.S. workers say that their employer does not require them to disclose a workplace romance, according to the most recent data from SHRM.

And that can cause just as much trouble as employees keeping relationships secret from a company that actually has a policy. A policy protects workers from "quid pro quo" relationships, it protects a company's morale, and ideally protects against lawsuits

and scandals.

"Companies that choose to look the other way are the ones that are allowing a smoldering fire to turn into an inferno," said David Lewis, CEO of Operations Inc., a human resources consulting firm. "Countless organizations have chosen to not deal with these head on and have paid dearly as a result."

The #MeToo movement shed light on toxic — and at times, criminal — workplace sexual misconduct that even the best office-

romance policies are unlikely to prevent. That includes film studio Miramax failing to address long-running accusations against Harvey Weinstein, who was eventually convicted of rape and assault, and NBC's brand being tarnished after sexual misconduct allegations against anchor Matt Lauer.

Hidden consensual romances present their own problems for companies, especially when top executives are involved. Because of the potential for power dynamics to come into play, a relationship with a lower-level employee is usually against policy, even if it is consensual.

When such a relationship comes to light, it often causes a public relations nightmare. In 2019, McDonald's fired CEO Steve Easterbrook after he acknowledged exchanging videos and text messages in a non-physical, consensual relationship with an employee. McDonald's forbids managers from having romantic relationships with direct or indirect subordinates. Then, the company sued him in 2020 when other relationships came to light that he had lied about. Easterbrook ended up returning \$105 million to settle the suit. □

Delta asks DOJ to put unruly passengers on no-fly list

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Any person convicted of a disruption on board a flight should be added to the national "no fly" list, Delta Air Lines told the U.S. Department of Justice.

In a letter to the Justice Department Attorney General Merrick Garland dated Thursday, Delta CEO Ed Bastian said there should be "zero tolerance" for any behavior that affects flight safety. Bastian noted that while such incidents of bad behavior represent a small fraction of overall flights on Delta, the rate of incidents on the airline has increased nearly 100% since 2019.

"This action will help prevent future incidents and serve as a strong symbol of the consequences of not complying with crew member instructions on commercial aircraft," Bastian wrote in the letter furnished to The Associated Press by Delta Air Lines.

Delta has, along with its industry partner Airlines for America, been pushing since last year for heightened reporting, investigation and prosecution of those who interfere with on-board safety. The airlines, based in Atlanta, said it has put nearly 1,900 people on Delta's "no-fly" list for refusing to comply with masking requirements and submitted more than

900 banned names to the Transportation Security Administration to pursue civil penalties.

A spokesperson with TSA, which enforces the FBI "no fly" list of potential terrorist threats, referred a reporter to the FBI since that agency maintains the database. Both the FBI and the Justice Department declined to comment. The Federal Aviation Administration cited 4.9 reported unruly incidents per 10,000 flights the week ending Jan. 23, according to its website.

In December, the TSA announced a new partnership with the FAA that would call for unruly airline passengers facing addi-



Delta Air Lines plane leaves the gate, Monday, July 12, 2021, at Logan International Airport in Boston.

Associated Press

tional consequences for bad behavior under a new partnership. Under the alliance, the FAA will share information of passengers facing fines for unruly be-

havior with the TSA, which may remove the passenger from its pre-check screening eligibility, a privilege reserved for low-risk travelers. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Soothing ointments
- 6 Snare
- 11 Heep of Dickens
- 12 Banish
- 13 Reach
- 14 Drive off
- 15 Earth's center
- 17 Soak up
- 18 Plate-washing need
- 22 Kin of PDQ
- 23 Pointed a finger at
- 27 Factories
- 29 Barrel piece
- 30 Manor setting
- 32 Pool sticks
- 33 "Sure about that?"
- 35 "Sure thing!"
- 38 Ship's front
- 39 Carry on
- 41 Horn sounds
- 45 Aspect
- 46 Mistake
- 47 Very serious
- 48 Distorts

DOWN

- 1 Program-ming error

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Saturday's answer

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|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 2 "Roses — red" | 20 Shaker stuff | 36 Bounce back |
| 3 Illuminated | 21 Quilt makeup | 37 Wild guess |
| 4 Ryder Cup | 24 Molokai neighbor | 40 Take advantage of |
| 5 Chases off | 25 Flat spot | 42 Lode material |
| 6 Breakfast choices | 26 Editor's | 43 Road rescue |
| 7 Chopping tool | 28 Plug | 44 Fourth-yr. students |
| 8 Waiting rewards | 31 It's north of Afr. | |
| 9 Singer Laine | 34 Carries | |
| 10 Lend a hand | 35 Puppy sounds | |
| 16 Hold up | | |
| 18 Titled woman | | |
| 19 Egyptian goddess | | |

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2-7

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

CRYPTOQUOTE

J ZIW HC SPP JES SP YPQDBS
SNJS HW SNHC TPQRL NB
VJWWPS NJXB BXBQGSNHWD
J VNPVHB HC JRR SNJS HC
RBYS — NIQQG ZJSNBTC

Saturday's Cryptoquote: THE ONLY MAN WHO NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE IS THE MAN WHO NEVER DOES ANYTHING. — THEODORE ROOSEVELT



This combination of photos shows promotional art for the series "Everything's Gonna Be All White," premiering Feb. 11 on Showtime, left, "Frederick Douglass: In Five Speeches," premiering Feb. 23 on HBO center, and "Profiled: The Black Man," premiering Feb. 12 on Discovery+. (Showtime via AP, left, HBO Max via AP, center, and Discovery+ via AP)

Associated Press

TV marks Black History Month with provocative, creative fare

By LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — How U.S. history is told and taught is being challenged and potentially constricted on several fronts, but television's approach to Black History Month is firmly in overdrive.

There's a wealth of provocative and creative Black-focused programs in February, looking deep into the past to examine topics such as the roots of slavery and the achievements of towering figures including Frederick Douglass. Freshly painful chapters including the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin in Florida also get attention.

The post-George Floyd onset of racial reckoning and the subsequent backlash have coincided with the growth of streaming and its voracious need for content, a two-fold incentive for TV to pay heed to the sweep and nuance of Black experience.

With broadcast networks and cable channels trying to keep pace with flush streaming services,

there's an impressive field of documentaries, profiles and more ahead. Among the highlights (all times are Eastern):

—"One Thousand Years of Slavery," Smithsonian Channel, Feb. 7-28. The four-part docuseries takes a global look at forced labor, examining its effect on people and societies. Prominent figures including Debbie Allen, Valerie Jarrett, Lorraine Toussaint and U.S. Sen. Cory Booker seek out their legacy from slavery as the program explores Africa, the Caribbean and elsewhere in an effort to look anew at history. The series from Angela Bassett and Courtney B. Vance's production company "stretches the canvas beyond the 400 years we've traditionally learned about" U.S. slavery, Bassett said in a statement. Vance narrates the series airing each Monday this month.

—"everything's gonna be all white," Showtime, 8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 11. An inventive, lively and trenchant assessment of race in American history from the

perspective of people of color. The three-part docuseries delves into topics including racial identity, the ongoing effects of racism on housing, education and health care and efforts by Indigenous people to protect their land. Historians, artists, activists and others weigh in, including Ibram X. Kendi, Jemele Hill, Favianna Rodriguez and Margaret Cho. Director Sacha Jenkins has described the series as embodying "the collected feelings of folks of color in America.... this is how America has treated us. This is how we feel."

—"American Masters: Marian Anderson: The Whole World in Her Hands," PBS, Feb. 8, (check local listings). A study of the artist and civil rights advocate's life, career and legacy, the film has the advantage of her speaking as well as singing voice. Anderson recorded more than 30 cassette tapes of interviews in the 1950s in preparation for writing a memoir and they, along with other archival material, were used to "explore history from her point of view," director Rita Corburn said in a statement. The first Black performer in a leading role at the Metropolitan Opera, Anderson made an indelible stand for civil rights and human dignity in 1939 when she was barred from one venue and instead sang to the world from the Lincoln Memorial. □

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Too many masks: WHO cites glut of waste from COVID response



File photo show a view of a waste basket with syringes and gloves after residents received a dose of the third Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, at San Jeronimo nursing home, in Estella, around 38 kms from Pamplona, northern Spain, Thursday, Sept. 23. 2021. Associated Press

By JAMEY KEATEN

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization says overuse of gloves, "moon suits" and the use of billions of masks and vaccination syringes to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus have spurred a huge glut of health care waste worldwide. The U.N. health agency reported Tuesday that tens of thousands of tons of extra medical waste has strained waste management systems and is threatening both health and the environment, pointing to a "dire need" to improve those systems and get a response from both governments and people. "Part of the message for the public is to become more of a conscious consumer," said Dr. Margaret Montgomery, technical officer of WHO's water, sanitation,

hygiene and health unit. "In terms of the volume, it's enormous." "We find that people are wearing excessive PPE," Montgomery said, referring to personal protection equipment. The agency says most of the roughly 87,000 tons of such equipment — including what she called "moon suits" and gloves — obtained from March 2020 to November 2021 to battle COVID-19 has ended up as waste. More than 8 billion doses of vaccine administered globally have produced 143 tons of extra waste in terms of syringes, needles and safety boxes. "It is absolutely vital to provide health workers with the right (protective gear)," Dr. Michael Ryan, WHO's emergencies chief, said in a statement. "But it is also vital to ensure that it can

be used safely without impacting on the surrounding environment." In the statement, Dr. Anne Woolridge of the International Solid Waste Association said "safe and rational use" of personal protective equipment would reduce environmental harm, save money, reduce possible supply shortages and help prevent infection "by changing behaviors." □



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Nearly 50, surfing icon Slater still catching winning waves

By **PAT GRAHAM** and **EDDIE PELLIS**

AP Sports Writers

On Day 3 of the Winter Olympics, America's biggest victory might very well have come not on a frozen halfpipe in China, but in the warm waves of the Banzai Pipeline, thousands of miles away in Hawaii.

The win belonged to Kelly Slater, the surfing great who turns 50 this week. Slater defeated a rider less than half his age to capture one of the sport's iconic events, the Billabong Pro Pipeline near the renowned reef off of Oahu.

Now that he's on top — again — Slater is starting to consider retirement. Nothing official, of course. Just thinking about it. For advice on the matter, Slater messaged with his buddy, Tom Brady, for a back and forth from one athlete dubbed the GOAT, or Greatest of All Time, to another.

"It would be interesting if that happened in the same week," Slater cracked in an interview Sunday (Saturday in Hawaii) with The Associated Press, on the possibility that he'd retire on the heels of Brady's announcement. "We'll see how that goes. I'm contemplating whether I stop now or really go full bore this whole year, which would be, in my eyes, really for the fans and saying goodbye to everybody after all the years of support they've given me."

Should he step away, he already has his retirement plans: surfing.



Kelly Slater celebrates after winning the Billabong Pro Pipeline on Feb. 5, 2022, in Haleiwa, Hawaii.
Associated Press

"Everyone who retires from surfing just goes surfing more," he said.

Not everyone has won this much. Slater was the youngest world champion when he captured the title at 20. He was also the oldest when he won it at 39. He just finished his last contest in his 40s with a win, too. He turns the big 5-0 on Friday. In all, he's become a household name and captured a total of 11 world championships. His win over the

weekend was his eighth World Surf League Championship Tour victory on the Banzai. It also marked his 56th overall tour win.

To close out his latest victory, he beat Seth Moniz, a 24-year-old sensation from Hawaii. Slater goes way back with Moniz's dad, Tony, whom he looked up to when he was up and coming. One of the most touching moments of this day came when Seth Moniz embraced Slater, who was

tearing up in the aftermath of the win. "An honor to surf against him," Moniz said.

Only a few days earlier, it looked like Slater might be eliminated by pipeline favorite 22-year-old Barron Mamiya. There were a handful of seconds on the clock when Slater caught a magical wave to steal the heat and advance.

That was a matter of his vast experience, combined with some timely good fortune, coming through.

"I mean, I kind of think of it like a martial art — you don't get worse as you get older, you get more experienced," said Slater, who also happens to be a scratch golfer.

This was the surfing equivalent of winning at Pebble Beach.

"I'm turning 50, but I look at it more like I have almost 40 years of experience at this wave and I'm able to draw on moments I've had out here before and find confidence in that," Slater said. Still, the win was surreal, even for him.

"Indescribable, indescribable," he said. "A lifetime of dedication to one thing and it all comes together on a moment like that is, I don't know how you compare it to anything else."

Over his years of catching waves, he's seen the sport explode in popularity. This victory comes a mere six months after surfing made its Olympic debut. In keeping with the ethos of a true action-sports star, part of him loves the exposure and part of him is reluctant.

Sometimes, though, it's just best to ride where the wave takes you.

"All of us, I guess, feel a little bit funny about any kind of mainstream thing with surfing," Slater said. "We want it to be a sport, we want it to have an outlet and get paid for it and stuff. But at the same time, we all feel so passionate about it that we want it to just be kind of sacred still, and secret and special." □



Indiana Pacers guard Caris LeVert, right, drives around Chicago Bulls forward Javonte Green during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis, Friday, Feb. 4, 2022.

Associated Press

Cavaliers agree to acquire guard Caris LeVert from Pacers

By **TOM WITHERS**

AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Pulling off a major move before the NBA trade deadline, the Cleveland Cavaliers have agreed in principle to acquire guard Caris LeVert in a trade with Indiana.

Pacers coach Rick Carlisle confirmed the proposed deal Sunday night shortly before the teams played. The Cavs have moved into playoff position this season

and believe they can win the Eastern Conference title. They've been aggressively shopping for more backcourt help after losing guards Collin Sexton and Ricky Rubio to season-ending injuries.

LeVert is averaging 18.7 points and 4.4 assists for the disappointing Pacers, who are 19-35 and already thinking about their future. "Cleveland is in a great position, and adding a guy

like Caris LeVert very well could push them to the top," Carlisle said during his pregame new conference, which was slightly delayed as news of the trade broke. "Caris has been a tremendous young man to work with here," Carlisle said. "He's a very special person and a very special player. He's a first-class human being and a first-class pro and a tremendous player. I'm going to miss him." □

NFL to bolster inclusion policies, probe tanking allegations

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
AP Pro Football Writer

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell told teams Saturday the league will look to bolster policies meant to encourage hiring of minorities, particularly as head coaches, and he pledged an investigation into tanking allegations raised by Brian Flores in his discrimination lawsuit against the NFL. "We will reevaluate and examine all policies, guidelines and initiatives relating to diversity, equity and inclusion, including as they relate to gender," Goodell wrote in a memo to the league's 32 clubs that was obtained by The Associated Press.

The commissioner added that the league's record on hiring minority coaches has been "unacceptable."

The memo came five days after Flores sued the league and three teams over alleged racist hiring practices for coaches and general managers, saying the league remains "rife with racism" even as it publicly condemns it.

The NFL's main avenue for increasing diversity in its leadership ranks is the two-decade-old Rooney Rule, which requires teams to interview minority candidates for jobs including head coach and general manager. Despite the rule, there is currently one Black head coach in the league: Pittsburgh's Mike Tomlin. There are no Black team owners, just a handful of Black GMs and relatively few Black coordinators in a league where more than 70% of players are Black or another ethnic minority.

Goodell said the league will include outside experts in its review along with "current and former players and coaches, advocates and other authorities in this area. Our goal is simple: make our efforts and those of the clubs more effective so that real and tangible results will be achieved."

In a statement, Flores' attorneys said while Goodell's memo appears to be a positive first step in confronting systemic racism in the league, they "suspect

that it is more of a public relations ploy than real commitment to change."

Flores, who is Black, was fired as Miami's coach last month despite back-to-back winning seasons. He named the league and three teams — the Dolphins, Denver Broncos and New York Giants — in a class-action lawsuit this week alleging unfair hiring practices in the NFL.

After the lawsuit was filed, the league said it would defend itself against claims it said were "without merit." The Dolphins, Broncos and Giants also denied Flores' allegations.

Goodell took a softer approach to Flores' claims in his memo.

"We understand the concerns expressed by Coach



Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross, left, walks off the field next to coach Brian Flores after the team's loss to the Atlanta Falcons in an NFL football game Oct. 24, 2021, in Miami Gardens, Fla.
Associated Press

Flores and others this week. While the legal process moves forward, we will not wait to reassess and modify our strategies to ensure that they are consistent with our

values and longstanding commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion," the commissioner wrote.

Flores' most serious allegation is his claim that Dol-

phins owner Stephen Ross told him he would pay him \$100,000 for every loss during the coach's first season because the owner wanted the club to "tank" so it could get the top draft pick. The Dolphins went 5-11 that year; the Cincinnati Bengals went 2-14 and used the No. 1 pick on quarterback Joe Burrow, who led the team to this season's Super Bowl.

"We also take seriously any issue relating to the integrity of NFL games," Goodell's letter said. "These matters will be reviewed thoroughly and independently. We expect that these independent experts will receive full cooperation from everyone associated with the league or any member club as this work proceeds." □

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Culinary Voyage

Start your gastronomic journey with a scrumptious appetizer such as the Maryland Crab Cakes, maybe the Crispy Calamari or the mouthwatering creamy Garlic Tarragon Shrimp. You can also opt for a classic French Onion Soup, a Lobster Bisque or the famously Water's Edge House Wedge, a crisp wedge of fresh romaine lettuce topped with homemade blue cheese dressing, diced tomatoes, chopped bacon, caramelized pecans and blue cheese crumbles, drizzled with balsamic reduction. This followed by the

Chef's special of seafood such as Fresh salmon filet seasoned and grilled, topped with lemon cilantro butter and served with homemade mashed potatoes and fresh asparagus, a nice plate of Ahi Tuna or a succulent pasta dish like the Florentina Fettuccine Alfredo. Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of a devourable 22oz. Bone-In "Tomahawk" Rib-Eye, pan seared in garlic infused oil and finished in the oven or our juicy N.Y Strip Loin, seasoned & grilled. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi glace, mushroom sauce, or bacon blue cheese butter. For extra sides the options are delectable. Fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with chocolate sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

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take home with you to extend your experience even further whether on the beach or your own private balcony.

ocean views. Gather with friends and family for drinks and appetizers or a night of pampering and relaxation.

Live entertainment

Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails mixed with concoctions. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Whether you join us for breakfast, lunch or dinner, Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar offers a relaxed and inspirational dining experience overlooking the beautiful Eagle Beach with spectacular

Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all through 2021, and hopefully will continue to do so in 2022. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, very to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! ☐



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